CHAPTER 4 KEY POINTS

UDOT works in cooperation with transit agencies throughout Utah, and supports improving and expanding transit facilities to make Utah's transportation network more efficient. UDOT will coordinate with transit agencies to identify appropriate transit accommodations during infrastructure improvement projects.

Click here for the UDOT Planning webpage.

Chapter 4
Transit and Passenger Rail

4.1 Overview

4.1

Transit and passenger rail move groups of people in a single vehicle, reducing demands on energy resources and transportation infrastructure. By doing so, they can have a measurable impact on congestion and air quality. For example, the current ridership on TRAX light rail is roughly equivalent to the capacity of an additional lane of I-15. Transit and passenger rail services provide travel options to the public. They also offer a valuable public service to a significant portion of the population that does not have the option of using a personal vehicle.

Transit Providers in Utah

- Utah Transit Authority
- Logan Transit
- Cache Valley Transit
- Park City Transit
- SunTran
- Cedar City Transit
- Ute Transit
- Association of Governments van fleets
- National Park shuttle
- Amtrak passenger rail

UDOT does not operate transit or passenger rail services, but works in partnership with the agencies who do in order to support their activities. Its role in transit and passenger rail is three-fold: (1) coordination with transit providers to ensure that the highway system serves transit vehicles' operational needs and transit vehicles do not conflict with efficient highway operations, (2) property-acquisition responsibilities (assigned by the Legislature) for large-scale transit projects (particularly the proposed commuter rail) on behalf of the transit agencies, and (3) the UDOT Public Transportation Team oversees transit feasibility studies, administers FTA funding programs to various non-profit transit operators, and works with Utah Transit Authority (UTA) Rideshare to distribute low- or no-interest vanpool loans.

While all of Utah's transit operators have short-term plans, as required by FTA, only UTA has a long-range plan at this time, through the joint efforts of Wasatch Front Regional Council and Mountainland Association of Governments. This chapter presents some of the major components of those plans and demonstrates the relationships of the MPO's long-range transit plans to UDOT.

A map showing existing and planned transit lines is located at the end of this chapter.

Addressing Passenger Intermodal Needs

Transit projects that have the most potential for improving intermodal connections with the highway system include additional Park-and-Ride lots, expansions of UTA's light rail transit (LRT) system, the addition of commuter rail along the Wasatch Front, and the implementation of bus rapid transit (BRT) routes.

UDOT currently provides 19 of the 112 Park-and-Ride lots located in the five-county area served by UTA. Of the remaining 93 lots, four are provided by shopping malls, five by Salt Lake County, one by Ogden City, 13 by UTA, and 70 at church parking lots. Park-and-Ride lots at church parking lots have been ideal, since churches are active in the evenings and on weekends, leaving lots available during commute times. Another advantage is that churches are typically located on collector/arterial streets at the edge of residential areas.

The Wasatch Front Regional Council 2030 Long-Range Plan for transit shows the need for several additional community intermodal centers and Park-and-Ride lots. Comments received from the public stated that a number of the existing lots are full to overflowing and should be expanded or supplemented in some way. Most new lots would be adjacent to state routes, and although UTA and other parties would likely provide them, UDOT may be able to assist in some locations. Regardless of which entity provides them, smooth access between these hubs and the highway will be crucial for the overall transportation system's efficient operation.

An issue pointed out by public comments was the need for maintenance of community intermodal centers and major transfer points to keep them clean and inviting. Availability of restrooms at these locations, especially during commute travel times, was also suggested. Partnership agreements between transit agencies, local communities, business owners, and UDOT will likely be the best way to address these concerns.

Light Rail Transit Expansion

The WFRC plan also shows expansion of UTA's infrastructure with five extensions of the current light rail system. One is anticipated to connect downtown Salt Lake City to Salt Lake City International Airport. A West Valley City spur will tie the main line to a proposed intermodal center near Valley Fair Mall, and later to Magna. A Sugarhouse spur is planned, as well as a spur through West Jordan and into the western part of South Jordan at the proposed Daybreak development. The existing main line is also planned to be extended south into Draper. According to the Mountainland Association of Governments (MAG) Long-Range Plan, the line may be extended at a future time to Lehi or even as far as Orem, if funding becomes available.

Commuter Rail

Phase 1 of commuter rail connecting Weber County and Salt Lake City is scheduled to be completed by 2007. Stations are proposed to be located at the Ogden Transit Center and the Salt Lake City Intermodal Center, as well as in the communities of Pleasant View, Clearfield, Layton, Farmington, and Woods Cross. In later phases, the line is expected to be extended north into Box Elder County and south through Utah County, with additional stations proposed in Brigham City, Murray, South Jordan, Bluffdale, Lehi, Pleasant Grove, Provo, and Payson.

Bus Rapid Transit

One of the most promising transit options now being considered is a concept known as "bus rapid transit" or BRT. BRT routes typically run in dedicated corridors like LRT, or they may utilize existing highway corridors – especially HOV lanes – or they may be a combination of the two. Rubber-tired vehicles run in the corridor and may be made up of several connected units, similar to LRT trains. BRT installation costs are usually a third to half of those for light rail and the lines are more easily rerouted. A BRT route also establishes a corridor that can be converted later to LRT, if ridership growth justifies the additional investment.

The WFRC Long-Range Plan shows BRT lines being added to the transit system on 1300 East, Redwood Road, the proposed Mountain View Corridor, the SR-201 and SR-36 corridor between Salt Lake City and Tooele, and the US-89/I-15 corridor between Ogden and Salt Lake City. The plan also shows short BRT connector routes between intermodal centers. The LRT line between Valley Fair Mall and Magna may start out as BRT. Mountainland Association of Governments is planning a college

connector BRT line between the I-15 interchanges at University Parkway in Orem and University Avenue in Provo at the East Bay business center. The line would connect numerous retail and residential areas, as well as the campuses of Utah Valley State College and Brigham Young University.

UDOT will continue to work with UTA and Utah's other public transit providers as new stations for light rail, commuter rail, and bus rapid transit are developed to ensure an efficient intermodal transfer between automobiles, buses, and trains. The stations' accessibility to pedestrians and bicyclists will also be considered. The viability of the numerous BRT proposals will depend on close coordination between UDOT and UTA because most BRT facilities will likely operate within UDOT right-of-way. Potential expansions of state highways and of bus routes will impact each other and need to be developed cooperatively.

4.2 Major Focus Areas and Goals

4.2

Most focus group and interview participants saw coordination between transportation providers as the most critical element in providing an interconnected, multimodal system that meets a wide variety of transportation needs. *Source: USU Benchmark Study, Phase II, 2003*

UDOT recognizes the importance of the following goals:

- Working with communities and transit agencies in the development and site selection of Park-and-Ride lots and community intermodal hubs, including incorporation within state right-of-way where appropriate
- Cooperating with the various transit agencies in system expansions as their funds become available. These may include light rail extensions, commuter rail options, and BRT systems. It also includes cooperating with UTA in the planning and implementation of their current bus network expansions to better serve east-west mobility across the Wasatch Front
- Coordinating with transit agencies operating on state highways when making infrastructure improvements to address their operational needs (e.g., HOV or dedicated BRT lanes, bus stop turnouts, adequate turning radii, and efficient access to intermodal centers)
- Providing adequate directional signage to train stations and intermodal centers
- Providing support for vanpool and rideshare programs, including low- or no-interest vanpool loans

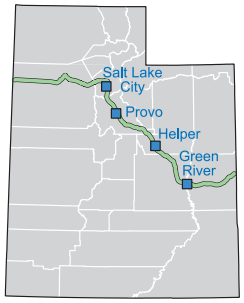
4.3 Funding

4.3

Transit and Commuter Rail

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding provided to transit agencies is apportioned by formula from the Highway Trust Fund to cover operational and capital expenditures. Discretionary funding and congressional earmarks are also established to address major capital needs. Some of this funding goes directly to the transit agencies, and some is approved and administered by UDOT. FHWA provides funding for low- or no-interest vanpool loans.

UDOT supports transit expansion and considers it a key element of making the transportation system work more efficiently. UDOT has been and will continue to be a partner on transit projects to help project implementation.



Amtrak route and station locations

Amtrak

Amtrak was established to ensure long-distance passenger service throughout the country. It currently serves Utah with stops in the communities of Salt Lake City, Provo,

Helper, and Green River on the California Zephyr line between Oakland, California, and Chicago, Illinois. The current Amtrak station in Salt Lake City is the site for the proposed Salt Lake City Intermodal Center that will provide a single point of connection between Amtrak's interstate passenger rail service, commuter rail, light rail, city and Greyhound buses, and BRT. Provo City is also considering development of an intermodal center at its Amtrak stop to provide similar connectivity. Ogden Transit Center, with minor modifications, would have the capability of providing connections to its existing transit hub for interstate passengers, in the event that Amtrak or similar rail service to Ogden were restored.

About 7 percent of Utah households have at least one family member with special transportation needs.
Source: USU Benchmark Study, Phase II, 2003

Although Amtrak has struggled to become profitable, as originally envisioned, the demand for good intercity and interstate passenger rail service still exists in Utah and across the country, particularly in areas without commercial air service. The question of how to best provide for this ongoing need remains unanswered. California and other states have successfully funded regional Amtrak trains that operate within their boundaries, but whether regional intercity trains would make sense for Utah and how to best preserve interstate connectivity are questions to still be resolved.

4.4 Recommended Projects

Because UDOT is not directly involved in providing transit services, the current list of projects that UDOT will be funding is limited to Park-and-Ride lots. However, UDOT is supportive of expanding transit and passenger rail services. For example, all studies of major urban corridors include a transit component that is coordinated with the transit provider, usually UTA. Extensive coordination was needed on the University TRAX line on 400 South to maintain the flow of both transit vehicles and motor vehicles. The 3500 South corridor study currently underway includes a proposal for a BRT or LRT line. The I-15 North EIS discusses a shared solution that includes commuter rail. UDOT contributed $20 million of federal highway funds toward the purchase of right-of-way for the proposed commuter rail corridor. The proposed Mountain View Corridor will likely include light rail or BRT facilities and several other BRT lines are being proposed in Utah and Davis counties within state right-of-way. UDOT anticipates similar partnership with transit agencies in the future, expanding the current project list as we work to find the best solutions to travel demand in Utah.

Transit and Passenger Rail Needs

REGION	PROJECT NAME/LOCATION	PROJECT CONCEPT	PHASE	ESTIMATED COST
Region One	Kaysville Park-and-Ride	Address overcrowding at existing site	1	$500,000
Region Two	Tooele Park-and-Ride	Construct lot on SR-36 at 2400 North	1	$1,000,000

WASATCH FRONT

Existing and Planned Rapid Transit and Commuter Rail